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THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to The Living of the Higher Life

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(c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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BEING AN "IMMEDIATE AGENT" OF KARMA

WHAT DOES it mean to be an agent or instrument of Karma? The first aphorism on Karma says, "There is no Karma unless there is a being to make it or feel its effects." Mr. Judge explains that not only every person, but every other being in the universe, every dog, every horse, even the sun, river, mountain, and moon, each of them is under the law of Karma or under the law of action and reaction, and they go to make the cosmos what it is. Even in our daily actions, whether we are conscious of it or not, we are agents in this sense. A single word of ours may have an influence for a lifetime upon another person. That word can arouse desire in him or it can awaken aspiration for spiritual life and change his life for the good. We may become an agent for someone being late for an appointment, and thus save him from calamity or push him into calamity, and so on.

According to the ancient Hindus, every being up to Brahma is under the rule of Karma. We are agents or instruments even while performing our everyday duties. As agents, we create karma or causes and also experience results or consequences for the same. However, all works, in a sense, are done by *Paramatma* or the Supreme Self, because the power to do anything comes from *Paramatma*. However, we are the agents *through* which the works are done. We all have a backlog of karma. Using that Karma, *Paramatma* or the Law of Karma gets things done. If any one of us was not there, the law would find some other "agent" suitable for

performing that action. We are born in a particular family, city, nation or community and play the role of a teacher, a sweeper, a housewife or a lawyer, all based on our past karma.

However, we perform our duties and actions with a strong sense of doership or *kartabhav*. As the Saint-poet Narsimha Mehta says, it is ignorance which makes you feel that *you* are doing anything, just like a dog that walks beneath the cart, feels that *he* is carrying the load of the cart. Swami Shri Savitanandji observes that as we live day to day life, we perform many duties and works, and all the time, we have the feeling and also the conviction that "I" have done this work, or this work got done because of *me*. Thus, for instance, a bread-winner of a family feels, "I am sustaining my family." What do we mean when we say, "I am sustaining my family"? What exactly have we done? Have we caused rain to fall? Have we made sun and moon to give light? Are we directing the air to flow in this or that direction? Or, is it that because we "will" that the crops are growing? We do not do any of these things. Saint Tukaram always said that only God is supporting and sustaining the whole world. Then what do we do? We become only a medium for that Great Power. The attitude to be cultivated is that everything that gets done is being done by that Great Power, and "I am only a medium or an instrument through which He gets that work done." We must abandon "*kartrutva bhav*" or doership, as also the attachment to the fruits of actions, and that is when we act as "immediate agents" or *nimitta matram*.

Further, he says that whatever we do, if it succeeds, we should not try to take credit or feel proud. If it does not succeed then we should not feel dejected. That is because we have not done it at all. Ramakrishna Paramhansa used to say, "I am engine, thou art driver." When we are travelling by train, and if we reach our destination without any problem then we do not thank engine for it. We say that it is driver who took us safely to our destination. But if there is accident, or delay we do not blame engine, we blame the driver.

There was a very poor lady who was suffering from the third

stage of cancer with a big tumor in her uterus. If that was removed by an operation, even then she would die, within a few days. The concerned doctor was reluctant to operate. Swamiji told him that a doctor is a pleader between God and the patient. He is a lawyer fighting the case. He is not a judge. God is the judge. He told the doctor to perform an operation. The operation was performed. That woman lived for more than fifteen years, well and doing all the work as before—working at home and also on the farm. The incident is a good example of what it is to do our work with the attitude of being only a *nimitta* or an instrument.

How can we know in every situation that we are only the "immediate agent" because as beings with the power to choose, we could be creating new karma or causes? A self-realized person, or a *Jnani*, who is identified with the Self within, takes up the position of a witness or an observer. Just as the light from a projector causes the projection of all the pictures on the screen, and yet it remains unaffected by various scenes of comedies or tragedies appearing on the screen, so also, the Self within is the cause of all actions, and yet, it is neither affected by nor involved in these acts. Even in ordinary activities like sleeping, breathing, speaking, etc., the attitude of a sage is, "the qualities act in the qualities," or "the senses move among the sense-objects," but the Self within is not the actor. There is the story of a sage who ate food with the *gopis* (shepherdesses) on the riverbank, and when the *gopis* said that they wanted to go to the other side of the river, the sage moved his hand over his stomach and said that if he had not eaten any food the river should part and make way for the *gopis*. The river parted. The *gopis* were surprised, as the sage had eaten food with them. The sage explained that the food was offered to the fires in the stomach, hence, "'I' have not eaten the food," the act of eating was like the offering of fuel to the "fires" in the stomach.

Let us perform all actions which are obligatory to perform. Let our motive be pure. Let us perform all actions for the welfare of humanity. When we work for others, the veils that come over our

souls fall away. "As the heart and mind are the real planes of error, it follows that we must look to it that we do all acts merely because they are there to be done. It then becomes difficult only to separate ourselves from the act. We can never as human beings rise above being the instruments through which that called Good and Evil comes to pass, but as that Good and Evil are the result of comparison and are not in themselves absolute, it must follow that we (the real 'we') must learn to rise internally to a place where these occurrences appear to us merely as changes in a life of change. Even in the worldly man this sometimes happens," writes Mr. Judge. He gives an example of the physician who rises above the pain that he knows will be caused to the patient and regards only the good that will follow from a painful operation. Therefore, instead of being concerned about "good" and "evil," we need to consider the motive. Thus, a soldier engaging in unlawful war also does not do anything wrong if his motive is pure. "They who go into war for gain or revenge do wrong, but not he who goes at his superior's order, because it is his present duty." (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, pp. 23-24)

Thus, in these three words "*nimmita matram bhava*" we are given the direction and guidance of making ourselves free from the bondage of life and death. "*Nimmita matram bhava*" is the advice given by Krishna to Arjuna. Krishna tells Arjuna that he is not really going to kill anyone from the opposite army of Kauravas, because they have been killed by Him. Arjuna should accept it all as his *prararbdha karma*. Since none of them is immortal, if not today, they will die tomorrow. Krishna says that He is *Kala* or "Time matured, come hither for the destruction of all these creatures." "Time matured" means the completion of cycle, or ripening of karma. It is our action or actions which produce cycles and determine the duration of the cycle. One such cycle is the cycle of birth and death. Shri Krishna tells Arjuna that even without him, *i.e.*, even without the intervention of Arjuna all the warriors in the opposing army were going to die. Hence, he says, "They have already been slain

by me: be thou only the immediate agent." This does not mean that life is predestined. Destiny or Fate is the Karma that has ripened so that its expression cannot be averted or postponed. The Karma that is irreversible may be called fate or destiny. Mr. Judge defines Destiny as, "Karma so strong and overpowering that its action cannot be counteracted by other Karma." A person who understands the working of the Law can predict the future. It is based on this law combined with the wisdom that Shri Krishna predicts the death of the warriors, saying that through their past actions they are destined to die. He invites Arjuna to fulfil his obligatory duty as a warrior and destroy unrighteousness, and become a mere instrument for the manifestation of the law. To be an "immediate agent," or an apparent cause, is to act without the feeling of "doership."

The Hindu religion has various names for fate: *Kala (*Time or *appointed* time); *Vidhi* (ordinance); *Daiva* (divine will). Fate, thus, is taken to be the result of acts done by the soul in former bodies, which exert irresistible power on the Soul. In a story, when a boy died of snakebite, Death or Yama said that he was guided by *Kala* (Time). Thus, the boy was killed neither by a snake, nor by Yama, but because the time was ripe. But *Kala* (time) said that even he had not killed the boy, but that he was killed by his Karma (Fate).

The above story very correctly links fate with Karma. There are three classes of Karma: *Sanchita*, *Agami* and *Prarabdha*. *Sanchita* Karma is that which is stored up and not in operation now, because there is not the appropriate environment or condition for bringing it into action. *Prarabdha* Karma is the portion or aspect of Karma with which one is born, and for whose precipitation the field is ready. It is operating in the present life and body, bringing about all the circumstances and changes. Destiny or Fate is the Karma that has ripened so that its expression cannot be averted or postponed. It is almost like a branch or a ripe fruit on a tree, ready to fall, which falls to the ground at the slightest contact of a bird or even by a light breeze.

In the article, "Men, Karmic Agents," Mr. Judge explains the

special and technical sense in which the word "karmic agent" is used. He mentions that there are people who are concentrators of the forces, who become instrumental in the sudden and quick precipitation of Karma. There are those who are gifted or cursed with this power, by virtue of the kind of life led in the past. Adepts, on the other hand, possess such power of concentrating the karmic forces by training. This is hinted at in Patanjali's *Yoga Aphorisms* (Aphorism 36): "When veracity is complete the Yogi becomes the focus for the Karma resulting from all works, good and bad." It is a well-known tradition in India that when someone meets and talks with an adept, his Karma begins to precipitate faster than usual. There are accounts of people who had met by chance Yogis in the forest and told them about a friend or a dear one at home, who was critically ill, and then on returning home found that the illness had disappeared at the very time of the conversation. At other times, meeting with the adept would result in exhausting a lot of unpleasant karma, once and for all. An instance of this is to be found in the story of Centurion's servant and Jesus of Nazareth. The story goes that Centurion, a Roman officer met Jesus when he entered Capernaum, and begged for help because his servant was sick in bed at home, unable to move and suffering terribly. Jesus offered to go to the officer's house and heal the servant, but the officer said that he was not worthy of having Jesus enter his house. Instead, he suggested that Jesus should only give the order and his servant would be well. He said that he was an officer himself and when he commanded his soldiers to do something it was done. Jesus was impressed by this Roman officer's faith. He turned to the crowd and said, "I have not found anyone in Israel with a faith like this." The Roman officer was told, "Go back home. As you have believed, so shall it be." The Centurion returned home and found his servant completely healed.

There are also those ordinary people, who have brought from their past lives, the power of concentrating Karma, and they continually bring to other people *sudden* good or bad effects, which

would have otherwise spread over many days or years, surfacing in small events of life rather than in one big event. Mr. Judge points out that this should also explain the power of the evil eye. A person with the evil eye is a Karmic agent who brings about destruction or harm to a person or a thing by merely looking at them. Thus, there are people who become "agents" for the quick ripening of another's karma, for good or ill.

However, we should never assume the role of a punisher or reformer, and become agents of Karma for those who offend us. We are not wise enough to know the impact of our suggestion or action, and hence in taking the position of a punisher or a reformer, we only generate bad feelings in others and receive the consequences of the same now or in future. On the other hand, when we encounter suffering, we must consider it our good Karma if we are able to be of help. We should be only too willing to help others, to the best of our ability and knowledge, instead of saying that it is their Karma to suffer.

MERCY is not opposed to Justice, and that the fullest justice is the same as the fullest mercy. Some take the meaning of Mercy to be a permitted escape from the results of wrong-doing; but this would not be Justice, nor would it be merciful to those injured by the wrong-doing. He should remember the definition of Karma: an undeviating and unerring tendency in the Universe to restore equilibrium, which operates incessantly. Karma is inherent law and its operation must therefore be impersonal. Some might take this to be "merciless," but that would only be because they desire escape from consequences that are unpleasant.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

FOOD FOR THOUGHT
THE PREMATURE BURIAL—I

THE PREMATURE BURIAL is a story by Edgar Allan Poe, written in 1844. It is a story of a man who is so obsessed with being buried alive that he makes elaborate plans to prevent it from happening. Critics comment that being buried alive was a common fear at that time and Edgar Poe made use of this fear to tell us a story of one who suffered acutely from this fear. The story is told by an unnamed narrator, who tells us about people who have been buried while still alive, only to be subsequently rescued.

He then provides examples of people who had been buried alive, including a Congressman's wife, who appeared to die and was placed in the family vault for three years before they again opened the vault to realize belatedly that the lady must have revived after her funeral and managed to escape her coffin. She apparently tried to call for help by banging on the door of the vault, but her burial shroud caught on some ironwork, and she consequently died on that spot. The narrator also tells of the wealthy French woman, Victorine Lafourcade, who was wooed by the poor Parisian journalist Julien Bossuet. She rejected him in favour of Monsieur Renelle, who treated her badly and caused her to die, at which point she was buried. The lover visited her grave and realized that she had actually been buried alive, and he revived her, after which they fled to America. When they returned twenty years later, Renelle tried to claim her, but a tribunal decided that the husband's authority no longer existed.

The narrator then tells of an artillery officer who received a concussion and apparently died. Two days after his hasty funeral, a peasant heard him struggling, and they uncovered his grave and took him to a hospital, where he revived and told of his experiences. He had swooned but was preserved by the air in the soil above his head, and when he heard a crowd above him, he woke up and became aware of his situation. He began to recover but died from a

medical experiment involving a galvanic battery. Conversely, the galvanic battery is the giver of life when Edward Stapleton dies of typhus fever. His friends do not receive official permission for a post-mortem, so they dig up the corpse and they manage to revive him with an electric shock. He claims afterwards that he never really died but was unable to speak during the autopsy.

After these examples, the narrator expresses his fear of being buried alive. He claims that these occurrences frequently happen without anyone knowing what is happening or how often they happen. The narrator suffers from a strange illness much like death, catalepsy, in which he falls into a deathlike trance. He is afraid that someday someone will mistake this trance for death because as his disease progresses, the trance becomes longer. In fact, the last time he fell into this trance, it was for a few weeks.

In all of the narrator's experiences, he suffers no physical harm but begins to dream of death and premature burial. In one case, during a cataleptic trance, he hears a voice telling him to sit up before it speaks to him of the agonies of night and death. It asks him how he can sleep so peacefully when so many of the dead do not rest easily. Because of this, the narrator becomes increasingly nervous and confines himself to the presence of friends for fear that he will be deemed dead. His increasing paranoia leads him even to suspect his friends of unreliability, despite their reassurances, and he renovates his family vault so that it can open from inside and includes adequate ventilation. He makes a spring-loaded cover for his coffin and attaches a bell to the top of the tomb that can be rung by a long rope that rests inside.

Despite all this, the narrator wakes up one day in total darkness. Keeping his eyes closed, he is filled with terror at his suspicion that he is in a coffin. When he opens his eyes, he sees nothing. He believes he has been buried alive as he cannot see and there is a weight on his chest. A heavy wooden cover sits six inches from his face, and he tries unsuccessfully to scream, only to realize that his jaws were bound up, as is usual with the dead. He flails his arms,

striking wood above his face. He tries to open the lid with the provisions he has made for his coffin, but finds nothing and, smelling dirt, concludes that he was not within the vault. He had fallen into a trance, while absent from home—while among the strangers—when, or how, he could not remember—and it was they who had buried him like a dog—nailed up in some common coffin—and thrust, deep, deep, and forever into some ordinary and nameless grave.

He is finally able to cry out and is answered. The narrator remembers that near Richmond, Virginia, he and a friend had been on the banks of the James River when a storm overtook them. They chose to stay onboard a small sloop [boat] anchored on the river, and the narrator had been asleep in one of the ship's tiny sleeping berths. The handkerchief was around his face because he did not have a nightcap and the wood was merely the boat. He had not fallen into a trance at all but rather had slept a full night. He had imagined in the sluggishness of awakening that he was in a grave, and the men who found him were unloading the ship's cargo of topsoil, which had provided the smell of dirt. The experience is terrible but shakes the narrator out of his fear of death and burials, and the catalepsy ceases as the narrator becomes more active and less fretful. He concludes that imagination is sometimes unhealthy and that man must ignore the darker possibilities of the world in order to survive. It makes him realize that it is useless to live in fear and that he cannot allow such thoughts to drive his existence.

At the end of the story, the narrator reminds us that the human mind can be dark, and unexplored fears will consume us. We must not dwell on such things for fear of driving ourselves mad. Although human experience is dark, we have to learn to put these concerns away and live, before death comes to take us.

In the article, "The Theosophy of Edgar Allan Poe," that appeared in *The Theosophical Movement* magazine, in November 1949, we read that this American poet, who died at the age of forty was a genius in his own way, though not to be compared with the Buddha

or Jesus. "And yet, if his creative powers were but the flowering of aptitudes cultivated in previous lives, they were *sui generis*. Few, if any, have excelled Poe in the depiction of the macabre, the sinister, in the painting of ruin, the evoking of despair, of dread, of awe before the superphysical. The article goes on to say, "It would almost seem, too, that some half-veiled memory of a terrible experience in a former life might have underlain his several dreadful tales dealing with premature burial, the possibility of which seems to have been almost an obsession with him." (*ibid.*, January 1950)

In the nineteenth century, fear of being buried alive was deeply rooted in western culture. Several cases were reported in which people were mistakenly pronounced dead by doctors. According to some critics, the boat incident wherein the narrator wrongly believes that he was prematurely buried tries to convey that to worry constantly about death is in itself something of a premature burial. It is evident that the narrator was unable to live a normal life because of the constant fear of being buried alive, and in that sense, he has prematurely buried himself.

Edgar Poe writes, "The boundaries which divide Life from Death are at best shadowy and vague. Who shall say where the one ends, and where the other begins?" We are able to compare what he says about the possibility of revival after the apparent death with what H.P.B. has written on the subject in *Isis Unveiled*. At the beginning of the story Poe writes: "There are diseases in which occur total cessations of all the apparent functions of vitality, and yet in which these cessations are merely suspensions....They are only temporary pauses in the incomprehensible mechanism. A certain period elapses, and some unseen mysterious principle again sets in motion the magic pinions and the wizard wheels. The silver cord was not for ever loosed nor the golden bowl irreparably broken."

To understand the revival and resuscitation of the dead we must understand the difference between the real and apparent death. When are the "dead" really dead? What the physiologists would term "real death" is actually not so. The man is not dead when he is cold, stiff,

pulseless, breathless and even showing signs of decomposition. The ancient philosophy teaches that death occurs at the instant when both the astral body and the spirit leave the physical body *forever*. The man is not dead even when he is buried, till a certain point is reached. That point which an occultist calls "real death" is, when the vital organs, such as the heart, liver, brain, etc., have become so decomposed, that if reanimated, they could not perform their customary functions. But until that point is reached, the astral body, which is the design body for the physical, can be caused to re-enter the physical body, either by the effort of the spirit or through the will of an occultist—one who has knowledge and control over the potencies of nature.

There are instances in medical history when the patient recovers spontaneously, and that is because the astral body has not parted from the physical body, only its external functions are suspended. In such a case, the person appearing to be dead is only in a state of lethargy or torpor. Such a state is called the state of "suspended animation." There are cases of suspended animation as a result of asphyxia (suffocation) by drowning, the inhalation of gases and other causes.

Nothing in nature is sudden, so too, death is gradual. As it required a long and gradual development to produce a living human being, so time is required to completely withdraw the vitality from the body. In *Isis Unveiled*, several instances of suspended animation have been narrated. There is the case of a gentleman who twice apparently died and was twice going to be buried, but revived spontaneously at the point of burial. The wife of a wealthy merchant in Moscow, remained in a cataleptic state for seventeen days. Since the decomposition had not set in, she was not buried and she revived at the end of seventeen days. A person in somnambulic trance, shows all signs of ordinary death. He would be pulseless and breathless, with the disappearing of animal heat, the muscles become rigid, etc. H.P.B. narrates the case of Colonel Townshend who threw himself into such a somnambulic trance in the presence of medical men,

who were convinced that he was dead. However, he revived after three hours. Thus, Demokritus rightly asserts that there exist no *certain* physical signs of real death.

And yet, instances such as the daughter of King Jairus, recalled to life by Jesus, and the Corinthian bride resuscitated by Apollonius of Tyana, show that these beings had the knowledge and the skill to distinguish at a glance between real and apparent death. Before reviving the daughter of Jairus, Jesus said, "She is not dead but sleepeth." So too, Apollonius had said of the Corinthian bride, "She has *seemed* to die." There is also the instance of a dead man reviving when the burial party was accosted by the robbers. Eliphas Levi explains that since the people who had come to bury the person were frightened, through sympathy their fright was communicated to the dead person. Since his (astral) soul was still hovering in the vicinity and felt horrified at the idea of the dead body being desecrated, it re-entered the body. At death, the astral body exudes out of the physical body by osmosis and through the brain. It hovers about the physical body by a double attraction, physical and spiritual, until the physical body decomposes. Under proper conditions, it is possible for the astral soul to re-enter the physical body. One of the reasons for the recommendation to keep the dead body for 12 or 13 hours before burial or cremation, could be the possibility of revival.

There is no miracle in such resuscitations. The clock has run down, it can be wound. If the death is absolute, so that the organs have not only ceased to act but cannot be reanimated to perform their functions, then "the whole universe would have to be thrown into chaos to resuscitate the corpse—a miracle would be demanded," writes H.P.B. A leaf once fallen off does not reattach itself to the branch. Therefore, when a woman brought her dead son to Lord Buddha, instead of reviving him, he taught her the lesson of the inevitability of death. It must have been the case of real or absolute death.

(*To be concluded*)

EFFECTIVE THEOSOPHICAL WORK

ROBERT CROSBIE passed away on 25th of June 1919 after laying the foundation and erecting the Temple of Pure Theosophy. The following are the extracts taken from *The Friendly Philosopher*, by Robert Crosbie:

Effective Theosophical work cannot be done unless there are found persons in the world who can see the necessity for it and will fit themselves more and more to supply the need. That certain persons find such an opportunity depends upon their realization of its importance. Once we see something of what the Theosophical Movement means to the world, we are necessary to it—not as persons—but because we see and do. The Movement is accelerated by us to the extent that we work for it, and hindered to the extent that we, as it were, let it *pull us along*. So, every student who will strive to make himself a fitting instrument is necessary to the work, to his full capacity—Soul, Mind and Body....If we are impressed with the significance of this, and accept "the fight that only fortune's favoured soldiers can obtain," we will hesitate not at all, but seeing that the present basis of action in the world is wrong, will work with it as far as we must, while *ourselves* thinking and acting from a very different basis. Our thoughts are *our* thoughts; our lives are our lives, and both are devoted to *our* work. Having put our hands to the plough, and seeing the field that needs cultivation, we may push on in confidence and faith.

There are many "good souls" who do not know their own minds, and hence have no solid basis in Theosophy, while accepting it as the only thing worth knowing....There are hundreds who have gone off on one wrong track or another. They all have some good traits.... They need guidance, not leadership. Study and Work is their only salvation and we can help them all to the degree that our Karma and theirs permits, if only by example...."U.L.T." is the only real "olive branch" in the Movement, for it means peace with all, in unity of aim, purpose and teaching.

EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED LETTERS
LINE OF LIFE'S MEDITATION

THERE ARE two lines of life-meditation—the personal and the inner. What we should aim at is to have but one—the Higher—to guide the lower and personal self. Many among us are devoted to the Cause and the Masters but faintly, compared to home and business and money-ambition, and psychic ambitions to shine and to lead!

Of course most men and women have two lines of life-meditation, but the lower, personal one is to the fore and wins, for according to it the incarnation is spent. But contrariwise, for real students of Theosophy the higher line should be dominant. Of course there is struggle between the two lines, but the higher gains the upper hand. In this war and growth seven ways, modes, paths or methods are existing. Growth and service of soul and souls—this is the objective. The how of it naturally differs, depending on individual Karma, etc. The seven ways of the lower line of life-meditation consists in eliminating weaknesses, so that the higher line is clearly reflected. Therefore the 12th chapter of *The Bhagavad-Gita* names several methods for achieving this. One or another used to purify and elevate the lower brings the result.

The 12th chapter of *The Bhagavad-Gita* with its ladder is wonderful. But the picture of the chela which forms the second half of the discourse carries the key which opens each of the steps of that ladder. Which of the "lesser" steps do you propose to work at in your mind-heart? You are coming upon an early step of chela-exercise. Of course all steps are necessary and yet one of them becomes the line of life-meditation. It is through and round that line that all other factors become involved. Let us consider this point in a different way. Here is the question: What is your objective and how do you propose to achieve and attain it?

Your aspiration to widen the field of Theosophical service is bound to be realized as you are actually engaged in it. You speak of "superior abilities," but what are these "superior" ones? Capacity is

ever and always there, like power. We have speech and mind, the Knower and his power to know. Though articulate human speech came to us with the lighting up of Manas, ever and always we had speech-power derived from the Sound principle in Nature. Now, this very human speech capacity is growing by degrees; growth is by and in kind and also in and by degrees. You *have* capacities and they are becoming better and better. Similarly Theosophical knowledge always expands and extends in degree and in kind. Chelaship is an extension of esoteric knowledge and it is different in kind from exoteric knowledge. You are now and here growing in the degree of esoteric knowledge. By practice comes perfection.

True, "thus far and no farther" applies to all, our own capacity also, but it is an ever-expanding and ever-deepening circle pass-not. This is an aspect of the perpetual External Motion and our own self-consciousness moves through dark and bright places and hours and somehow grows and unfolds. So with peace and contentment we should use the bright and with patience and resignation improve the dark. More and more do I feel how permanence and immortality are with us.

Unless you become silent, less tense, calm and dispassionate, you will not be able to evaluate the worth of your virtues, capacities, powers and faculties—mental and moral. You have these but you do not know their true worth. When you do this you will become ready to deal with the situation correctly.

The *Light on the Path* statement, "Grow as the flower grows, unconsciously," is an advice to the disciple. It specifically refers, not to the making of the effort, but to the looking for results, and quick results at that. Compare yourself to a good *mali* [gardener]. He has to work, clean the ground of the weeds of the lower nature, turn up the soil, use manure and then sow his seeds and water the upcoming sprout. But what will you say of the *mali* if he pulls up the sprouting and growing plant to see how deep the roots have gone into the soil, on which of course the growth in strength of the plant depends? The plant will die. So the disciple must deliberately

make his effort at study, etc., but not be anxious to ascertain how he is unfolding. Our growth when achieved will of course be noticed by us and will reveal to us the next step to be taken. *Light on the Path* is made up of paradoxes, of pairs, and each of the pairs has to be taken into account. Please read the whole passage and note the opposing poles coalescing in harmony.

In answer to the question how long it takes to become a Master, you can consider the line of thought presented in *The Voice of the Silence*. Once a man enters the stream of spiritual life, and if he is determined to go on with care and vigilance, he will attain the goal in seven lives. The difficulty is the following out of the programme, and the illusion comes from the fact that people think their Karma will not permit it. The teaching is that every piece of Karma can be utilized for spiritual needs and so the period of seven lives, though it sounds short from one point of view, is adequate from another real point of view.

When does one enter the stream? When one practices swimming the waters and plunges to go upwards, to the source of the stream. Most of us are learning to swim. We know the stream is there; we know its source is in very high altitudes. This swimming upwards is Occultism. Theosophy warns us against plunging in unprepared. We are likely to be forcefully taken away *downstream* and to merge ourselves in the Ocean of Liberation. Theosophy and its practical science, Occultism, say, "Upwards, please." We meet rocks; we go against the worldly current. So when we have learnt well and sufficiently and our application is continuous, for 24 hours of the day and 52 weeks in the year, we learn Higher and Secret Wisdom. *This* is the starting point for the seven lives spoken about in *The Voice of the Silence* (p. 51). *Srotapatti* is one "initiated" by his Guru in the Wisdom-Way because he has passed tests and trials and has developed Self-Reliance, Interdependence, concentrated Devotion.

It is better that the personality learns to stand alone, but on a spiritual basis. The heresy of separateness or of false independence is rampant in our civilization. Some students misread and

misunderstand the Third Fundamental and what is said there about self-induced and self-devised ways and means. Inner unity implies that we think and feel unity with all as personal beings, but in our own way; not for display, but to enlighten Life. Our self-chosen paths, of each man by himself begin to converge as the march of progress takes place and we come to a great junction; then we find seven Ways and one becomes ours; and then on that one we come upon Liberation or Renunciation. You will find that we are never, never alone; the notion of separate existence has to be overcome. Read the last lines on p. 276 and the top ones on p. 277 in *The Secret Doctrine*, I. Proceed on that basis and you will see what I am driving at.

On seeing the Self in all, and the Self as all, Judge has many ideas, suggestive and provocative. Without directly doing so, his writings impel and compel us by inspiration to establish practice through right application. In the great round-up, as he says, little faults have no place. It is our line of life-meditation which is the most vitally important. Are we true to Theosophy and the Masters, Their Cause and Their Teachings? Are we faithful to the end of the incarnation? Then we shall attempt to be faithful to the endless end. Now the essence of practising this Faith is loving the soul in all, the soul in and of the sinner, also of those who arouse antagonism in us. The Glory of the Lord in us reveals the Glory outside.

The evolutionary process consists in the bringing down (the involution) of the Monadic power and influence into the embodied soul (the *dehi* of *The Bhagavad-Gita*), the personal soul. Purification is essential: the separation of the controller—the Internal Organ, *Antahkarana*—from the controlled. This enables that enlightening personal soul to raise its own *Skandhaic* and *tanhaic* elementals to a higher level (evolution). Complete progress implies this dual task. This topic of involution-evolution is an item for *The Secret Doctrine* study; it is dealt with there in several places.

MAYA—ILLUSORY SUPERPOWER
II

THE THEISTIC Hindus regard Maya or *Prakriti* with three qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, to be an indispensable part of God's feminine aspect, described as *Sakti* or energy. This feminine aspect has been personified as *Mahamaya* or great illusion, which is responsible for the creation of the physical world. In the article, "The Future Occultist," H.P.B. points out that the union of *Siva* and *Sakti* is a purely allegorical account. *Buddhi* or Spiritual Soul in man (is *Prakriti* in the Universe), represented as "female," because it is passive, and is the vehicle of *Atman* or Spirit. This *Atman*, when spoken of in relation to the entire Universe, is called *Purusha* and is depicted as active "male," for it is the CENTRE OF ENERGY, acting through and upon its female vehicle. The union of the two produces the phenomenal creation. Thus, since the energy of *purusha* or spirit expresses itself through *prakriti* or female, the goddesses or consorts of gods are worshipped as *Sakti*. Thus, *Brahmi* or *Brahmani* is the power of Brahma; *Maheshvari* is the power of Siva; *Vaishnavi* is the power of Vishnu, etc. These *Saktis* are creative energies that are inherent in and proceed from various Gods and are personified as various goddesses.

Durga Saptashati or *Chandi Patha* is a religious text of Hinduism and forms part of the *Markandeya Purana*. It consists of 700 verses arranged in 13 chapters. It is an allegorical account of the conquest of various demons by Goddess Durga. The demons fought and killed by her represent a variety of obstacles, vices, desires, attachment, aversion, emotions and negativities that must be overcome by the spiritual seeker in order to reach the goal of self-realiasation. One of the demons killed by the goddess is Dhumralochan. *Dhumra* means smoke and *lochan* means eyes. Therefore, *Dhumralochan* means the one whose eyes are covered by smoke. As "eyes" refer to perception, Dhumralochan is one who lacks clear perception. When the smoke of illusion is removed one

is able to see clearly, know things as they really are. As St. Paul says, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (*Epistle to the Corinthians*, 13:12). To see "through a glass"—mirror—darkly is to have an imperfect vision of reality.

Dhumralochan is illusion personified. Illusion is a false perception which comes about when we are inwardly disturbed by anger, anxiety, distress, etc. Swami Shri Savitanandji gives an example while explaining the symbolic meaning of Dhumralochan. Seeta was held in bondage by Ravana in a garden called *Pushpavatika*. When the monkey-god Hanuman visits that garden to meet Seeta, he sees red flowers growing around the place where Seeta was held in bondage. However, those who expound on *Ramayana* say that according to Seeta the flowers were white, but Hanuman saw them as red in colour, as his eyes had become red due to his anger towards Ravana.

Dhumralochan represents *Viparyaya* or incorrect knowledge or false knowledge formed by perceiving a thing to be other than what it really is on account of illusive perception. We do not see the world as it is because of our *vasanas* or tendencies of previous lives. Like an alcoholic does not see correctly when drunk, we do not see correctly when we are "drunk" or immersed in the sensual pleasures of the world. We erroneously think that it is possible to know God through rituals, ceremonies, idol worship, recitation of *mantrams*, etc. We are deluded even as to who we really are. Swami Savitanandji quotes Saint Kabir who says that *Maya* (Illusion) and *Chhaya* (shadow) are of the same nature. Both are subtle. Just as one is unable to cut a shadow into two parts with a weapon, so also, Dhumralochan, the personified illusion, is not killed by any weapon. If one wants to be free of one's shadow, one has to stand facing the light. Similarly, it is said that the Goddess burnt Dhumralochan by the sound of "hum," or *hun-kar*. In other words, Dhumralochan, representing Maya or a false sense of "I" can only be destroyed by the one who understands *So-ham*.

The term *Hamsa* hides within itself, *aham-sa* ("I am he") and *So-ham* ("he is I"). Thus, in the term *Hamsa* is contained the universal mystery of the identity of man's essence with god's essence. *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 78) mentions that "*Kalaham-sa*" or "I am I' in the eternity of Time answers to the Biblical "I am that I am." The manifested Logos, Brahma of the Hindus, and Ormuzd of the Zoroastrians, as also every individual is *not different in their essence from the Absolute*, explains H.P.B. In other words, one realizes that "I" am not the body, mind, feelings, knowledge, skills, etc. but "I am THAT," and that divine essence is present in everything, so that we are all one in essence.

We get a deeper understanding of the nature of Maya and overcoming of the same in the *Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali*. When it says that "The Soul is the Perceiver; is assuredly vision itself pure and simple; unmodified; and looks directly upon ideas," it means that Higher Manas or *Atma-Buddhi-Manas* is the real Perceiver, it is the *seer*, pure consciousness, capable of perceiving things as they are. But it is unable to perceive them so, because it has to use the lower mind as its instrument like the astronomer uses his telescope to acquire information respecting the heavens.

The instrument or the mind, "is like a mirror; it gathers dust while it reflects." What we call "our mind" is a number of ideas held by us, and we act in accordance with these ideas, writes Mr. Crosbie. "Mind is the great Slayer of the Real. Let the Disciple slay the Slayer." It refers to the lower mind, the incarnated consciousness working through personality. While senses bring in the data, it is the mind which perceives them as ideas. But this perception is coloured by the conception. We are not able to see things as they are because our mind is covered with the dust of attachment, the dust of passions, the dust of prejudice and biases. In the *Studies in the Voice of the Silence* we read that the world of objects is illusory in the sense that our valuation of them is false. The objective world may be compared to a great market-place in which the desire-enslaved minds, not knowing the true prices of things take them and then bargain and

haggle for them. The mind exploited in the market-place of the objective world gains experience and learns to evaluate each object at its proper worth. Ultimately, one has to be indifferent to objects of perception. When the mind is engulfed in desires it is unable to see the true value of worldly objects.

To clean the mirror or to adjust the instrument implies that we must acquire universal ideas. Thus, "Every human mind is a ray of Soul, and in every incarnated existence that mind carries within itself the Seeds of Wisdom. The weeds of passion, pride and prejudices prevent their sprouting....Men and women do not live; they only exist and go through life; they pass through numerous experiences but fail to learn the lessons. The mind requires the breadth of vision resulting from the assimilation of universal ideas. It also requires the depth and insight born of noble feelings which are impersonal....The human mind is compared to a mirror...The mirror would reflect the light, but the dust of false knowledge, the dirt of passions, the ashes of moral death, are allowed to cover the mirror" (*Living the Life*, pp. 81-82). *The power to know* does not come from book-study nor from mere philosophy, but from the actual practice of altruism in deed, word and thought. Such a practice purifies the covers of the soul and permits the light to shine down into the brain-mind, writes Mr. Judge.

Maya is the veil that covers our real nature and the real nature of the world around us. Since Maya is an illusion-producing ignorance; like any other form of ignorance, it will ceases to exist when we have acquired the knowledge of our own divine nature. Maya or illusion is defined as the "perceptive faculty of every Ego, which considers itself a Unit separate from, and independent of, the One infinite and eternal SAT, or 'be-ness'." In this sense, we might say that the absence of spiritual discernment is a delusion. Delusion is *Moha*, so that the person is convinced that his illusion is right. Delusion seems to be the result of egoism. In the Ninth Chapter of the *Gita*, Shri Krishna says, "The *deluded* despise me in the human form, being unacquainted with my real nature as Lord of all things."

Being encased in different bodies and personalities, the true light is obscured and we are led to believe that each one of us is separate from others. Arjuna, too, was under the same delusion. It is only when he was made to realize that in the heart of every creature there is Master *Iswara*, that he says that his *moha* or delusion was destroyed and that he had regained his (*smriti*) memory.

Saint Kabir speaks of two kinds of Maya: gross and subtle. Maya in the grosser form includes all those things which give us worldly pleasures, such as wealth, property, worldly name, fame, etc. The subtle form of Maya includes pride, desire for love and respect from others. Kabir says "*moti maya sab tyaje, zini tyaje na koi*," meaning, many are able to overcome Maya or illusion in its grosser form, but even saintly and spiritually advanced people find it very difficult to overcome *ahankara* or pride or egotism, arising from the illusion of "I, Me and Mine," that manifests in subtle form. It is comparatively easy to give up attachment to worldly attractions but even after progressing spiritually, one may continue to feel pride in the position one occupies in a monastery, ashram, or temple, and in one's spiritual achievements, such as knowledge and power.

In *Devi Bhagwata Purana*, it is said that once Narada asked Vishnu: "What is *Maya*?" Vishnu told him to fetch some water from the river before he answered his question. When Narada was bringing water, he saw a beautiful woman and was smitten by her beauty. He married this woman and built a house and had children and grandchildren. Then Vishnu sent flood and lightning, and Narada was swept in the flood and began drowning. He cried for help and then Vishnu brought him out of the water and asked, "Where is my water?" Narada said, "how can you be so remorseless and ask me for water when I have lost my entire family?" Vishnu told him to calm down. He reminded Narada that his house, and his family all came only from Vishnu; that Vishnu was the only reality and that everything else was an illusion. Narada, the greatest devotee of Vishnu, knew all that and yet he fell under the sway of *Maya*. In the *Key to Theosophy*, H.P.B. points out that unless a God descends as

an *Avatar*; no divine principle can be otherwise than cramped and paralyzed by turbulent, animal matter. Heterogeneity will always have the upper hand over homogeneity, on this plane of illusions.

According to Saint Kabir, it is *Prakriti* or matter made up of three *gunas* or qualities that separates the ego from the *Atman* or the Divine. To overcome Maya or illusion is to rise above the three qualities. "For this my divine illusive power, acting through the natural qualities, is difficult to surmount, and those only can surmount it who have recourse to me alone" (*Gita*, VII).

The highest path which leads to emancipation is "separation from three qualities," or rising above the three qualities. In a real sense, it is not possible to separate oneself from the three qualities, but what is meant is not to get attached to or identified with the three qualities. It is because we identify with forms and conditions that we feel we are separate from others, and as a result act in a manner which binds us to this worldly existence. When a person is able to see that all the drama of life is the play of three qualities and the real Self is above and beyond these three qualities, he attains to immortality, and is said to be above the three *gunas*. We are given the description of the person who is above the three qualities. He is someone who is not affected by the presence or absence of these qualities; he does not long for them, nor does he dislike them when they appear. He is someone who is equal in pain and pleasure; with those who like or dislike, with those who praise or blame, or those who are enemy or friend to him. Thus, one meaning of rising above the three qualities is being *stithaprajna* or equal-minded, having risen above the pairs of opposites.

To go beyond the three *gunas* we have to reach *Turya State*, a state of high spiritual consciousness, beyond the Dreamless Sleep State. In this state the individualized spirit possesses true knowledge and the universal, eternal, ever-present intuition.

(*Concluded*)

AFTER-DEATH CEREMONIES

IN THE religious traditions of every people more or less elaborate rituals and ceremonies are prescribed to be observed for the salvation of the departed soul by the surviving near and dear ones of the deceased. They consist of funeral ceremony connected with the final disposal of the mortal remains, immediately after death, by burial or cremation, and those conducted periodically thereafter, usually on the day of death every year, in their honour. The rituals vary among peoples according to their respective customs, beliefs, and religious injunctions, apart from such normative secular gestures as offering support and sympathy to the near relatives of the deceased, celebrating the memory of the departed by the well-wishers, and so on.

Spontaneous gestures of showing respect and reverence by the kin for the loved one who has departed is a natural human sentiment, and is understandable. But what is questionable is the elaborate and expensive rituals the relatives of the departed are mandated to carry out by the priestly prescription, periodically, long after the obsequies, and, thereafter, annually, for the whole of the life of the performer. These rituals are based on the belief, enforced by the authority of the priest, that they are efficacious in helping the departed soul on a safe passage to heaven, which otherwise would regress into hell and suffer. The Christian Church of all denominations prescribe Requiem Mass to be performed by the faithful in honour of the departed soul. It is based on the belief that the purification of souls in purgatory can be assisted by the actions of the faithful on earth by prayers, alms, sacrifice of holy Mass. Similar belief is prevalent in Islam also. Prayers and supplications are made for the salvation of the dead. (*Quran*, 40:7-8)

Among the Hindus, offering rice ball and water (*pindodaka kriya*) to the departed soul is an obligatory religious practice, which is believed to sustain the soul in its passage in the post-mortem journey and in securing its blessings. Besides, many gifts in cash and kind

are prescribed to be disbursed by the near relative of the deceased, the chief beneficiary of which being mostly the officiating priest. The faithful unquestioningly conform to the custom, fearing that the soul of the loved one that has departed would otherwise suffer hunger, thirst and other torments, and the family incur the sin of negligence. The faithful are driven to conform by the love and respect for the dear-departed, and the fear of consequences of omission of the customary ritual. Many a poor family unable to cope with unaffordable cost of after-death ceremonies have run into debt and many have been financially ruined.

It is evident that the custom, and the belief on which it is based, lack sound philosophical basis, and has grown to be a superstition. It is to be noted however that many ancient customs and beliefs, however absurd and unreasonable they may appear, have a basis in truth which has been covered over with misconceptions over centuries. The beliefs and customs pertaining to after-death ceremonies is one such. The forgotten truth about it is to be searched for, discovered and disseminated, if reform is to be brought about.

Mr. Judge, in *Notes on the Bhagavad Gita* (p. 22, Indian edition), commenting on the sentiment expressed by Arjuna that ancestors, deprived of the ceremonies of cake and water offered to the manes, sink into infernal regions, remarks that this old practice is corrupted and debased because "the inner constitution of man, and the constitution of the Macrocosm, are not understood in such a way as to make the ceremony of the slightest use." Knowledge spoken of has been obscured. Partially ending centuries of silence and secrecy on the mysteries of man and nature the Masters of Wisdom have given out in public teachings, through Their Messengers, an exposition of the principles, constitution and laws of the Macrocosmos, and man, the Microcosm. A study of the seven principles of man, of the prenatal and post-mortem states of consciousness of man, and the laws of Karma and Reincarnation which Theosophy teach, throw light on the question on the meaning and efficacy of the after-death ceremonies. Without going into

extensive details, the sevenfold constitution of man may be briefly recounted in order to understand the truth about the states of consciousness of man during life in the body and after the death of the latter, and how these are affected by his Karma.

Man has broadly two aspects: mortal and immortal. His immortal aspect is divine nature. It was never ever born nor does it ever die, but is eternal. It is the Real Man. It is actually one in three aspects, or threefold: *Atma*, *Buddhi*, *Manas*. Man's mortal aspect, on the other hand, subject to birth and death, is fourfold: Body, Astral Body, principle of *Kama* (passions and desires), and *Prana* the life principle.

The Real Man is the reincarnating Ego—gathering experiences from countless series of lives on earth in bodies made of the four lower principles. Circumstances of life of man in each of his many re-incarnations are determined by his own Karma done in prior lives.

Higher Self being of divine nature cannot directly incarnate in, nor act upon, gross material nature of the four lower principles. It can act on earth in the body acquired by Karma only indirectly through its image reflected in the lower mortal nature. This reflected image is the Lower Self—the mortal terrestrial man. While the former is Divine immortal Individuality, the latter is perishable personality.

This terrestrial personality, the reflected Mind-being, has two aspects: one is the higher and nobler aspect called *Antahkarana* which links it to the Higher Self, and the other is rooted in and enveloped by animal passions and desires, *Kama*. Personal man has free will. He can choose to aspire higher and live by the dictates of nobler qualities and promptings of the Divine Self, or listen to and be guided by the lower, more familiar selfish desires and passions.

By the one he raises himself towards a higher and nobler life which makes for peace and happiness in life; and culminates, if persisted in life through many lives, to absorption of his purified self with the Divine Self. When darkness of ignorance is destroyed and the involuntary cycles of birth and death is ended, he becomes a god, and finally re-becomes GOD. By the other he undergoes a long series of rebirths, with all its miseries and limitations, produced by his own actions.

Good thoughts, unselfish deeds, nobler aspirations of man alone survive the death of the body, and become the seed of blissful spiritual consciousness, called severally as *Swarga*, *Devachan*, *Sukhavati*, Paradise, etc. All the thoughts and deeds of earthly, passional and selfish sort are dissipated but recombine to form a new personality for the Ego when it has to return after the exhaustion of the mental energy which translated it into *Devachan*.

What is called death is not the final end but the beginning of a progressive separation of principles or vestures of the Ego. The process of death begins with a rapid review by the personal self in minutest detail of the life that has ended, in the presence of the light of the Divine Ego. At the end of it the lower self, clothed in Astral Body and *Kama*, finds itself in *Kama Loka*. Speaking of the process in this state, Mr. Judge teaches: "In that state they become what they thought. They were bigots and tortured others; those thoughts give them torture. Internal fires consume them until they are purified" (*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita,* p. 143). This is the meaning of suffering in hell, which is not a location in space but a state of mental consciousness of man, during life and after death. This state after death is temporary, called purgatory because the Ego sheds the lower psychic energy of material nature it had generated by its thoughts and deeds in life. If life lived was of good thoughts and virtuous, the transition through *Kama Loka* is rapid, and otherwise if the content of life thoughts was of material, sensuous and selfish. The Ego then relinquishes the Astral Body and *Kama*, which both coalesce to form what is called *Kama-rupa*, an astral corpse devoid of mind or conscience, the psychic dregs of the personality that was, to dissipate over a time in that realm. This is second death. The more gross is the life lived the more coherent and longer lasting is the *Kama-rupa*. It is popularly known as the *Bhut*, and spook and Elementary in Theosophical parlance. The Ego then, soon after relinquishing *Kama-rupa* becomes clothed in higher thoughts of more spiritual kind it had during life, which cannot die, and enters into a spiritual consciousness of *Devachan* in which it enjoys an

unalloyed bliss in the visualization of its thoughts and deeds of virtuous kind, illuminated and expanded in the light of *Atma-Buddhi*. One of the reasons behind the ceremonies for the dead is the belief that the soul may be detained in *Kama Loka* by the enormous force of some unsatisfied desire and cannot get rid of the astral and kamic clothing until that desire is satisfied by someone on earth or by the soul itself, to prevent it from becoming a restless, wandering soul. Devachanic state also has several degrees depending on the power and spiritual quality of higher thoughts of the Ego during incarnate life on earth. The more spiritual is the life led on earth, the longer will be the duration of the bliss of *Devachan*; the average period of this state for the souls in the present age being a thousand and five hundred years.

At the end of the term in *Devachan*, with the exhaustion of the energy of higher ideation of the Ego, it is drawn back to another incarnation, in a family, parentage and circumstances determined by the just law of Karma.

In view of the explanation of the laws governing the states of consciousness of the soul after death of the body outlined above, it is evident that the after-death ceremonies performed by the relatives of the deceased can have no effect on either the condition of the soul or on its passage through various states of consciousness nor can they influence the process of reincarnation. It is the Karma of the person during life on earth alone that determines the condition and course of the soul after death with which none can interfere or influence. "No living being, no god or goddess, has the power of impeding the immutable law of nature called *karma*, especially after the death of the person that evolved it." (*Theosophical Articles and Notes*, pp. 97-98)

Primitive races had or have no such rites and ceremonies. Patriarchs of Abrahamic religion were buried without any rites. Ancient Zoroastrian books prescribe no such expensive and elaborate ceremonies except reading sacred books and performing a few acts of charity. *Sruti* texts of India also lay down no such rites as are

practiced now, except a recitation from the sacred texts at the time of cremation. Nor do we find them in the epics. The practices now in use are a later invention by the priests of the religious establishments for the benefit of the priest class and for its hold on the minds of the credulous masses. If the *Smriti* texts contain injunctions of elaborate rituals and ceremonies they are doubtless later interpolations by the sectaries at a later date. That such have taken place is a well-known fact. Hence in reading those texts one has to use reason and discrimination to winnow the true from the false. *Smriti* texts themselves say that in case of doubt or controversy on any portions of the texts it should be resolved by referring to the *Sruti* teachings. In the latter no such prescriptions for elaborate after-death ceremonies are found.

What then is the true practice which was in vogue but now corrupted and lost? Theosophy teaches that in past ages when true knowledge and practices were prevalent, Occultists, who were always present and accessible, would protect the *Kama-rupa* of the dead person, soon after death, with an armour against terrestrial attractions due to necromantic and mediumistic practices of certain class of people. There was no need for it to be repeated year after year. This is all that is needed. Now in the dark cycles true knowledge and true practices are lost, nor can such high Occultists to be found. As the Buddha taught, we must examine our sacred books and traditions in the light of higher reason and intuition, and by study of Esoteric Philosophy, separate the chaff from the grain, and collect the grain and discard the chaff.

"Nor, from the occult standpoint, do such rites [as in vogue at present] benefit in the least the departed soul. The correct comprehension of the law of Karma is entirely opposed to the idea. As no person's karma can be either lightened or overburdened with the good or bad actions of the next of kin of the departed one, every man having his Karma independent and distinct from that of his neighbour—no more can the departed soul be made responsible for the doings of those it left behind." (*ibid.*, p. 95)

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Healing Touch is a healing technique developed in the early 1980s by a nurse, Janet Mentgen, at Colorado, which is rooted in the idea that near-body or light touch can support the body's ability to heal. In more than thirty per cent of America's Veteran Administration hospital system healing-touch therapies have been incorporated into conventional treatment to comfort patients.

The author, Amy Paturel, had a first-hand experience of the Healing Touch therapy when her son who had a double aortic arch—a condition where an extra branch stemming from the heart constricts the airway like a vise—suffered acutely after the surgery. The suggestion to try this therapy came from a paediatric nurse at the hospital, who herself performed it by keeping her hands a few inches above the body of the patient. The patient experienced steadied heart rate, calmness and relief within minutes.

Science, so far, has not been able to explain the mechanism behind this practice, though some physicians and psychologists have made some guesses. During ancient times, a therapy known as "laying on of hands" was used to give relief to suffering people, and today, similar energy-modulating practices find their place in modern medicine, especially when effective treatments fail to bring results.

"The term 'biofield therapies' was coined at a National Institution of Health meeting in 1992. This family of treatments includes ancient Chinese therapies like acupuncture and Qigong, as well as more recently developed practices such as reiki (which originated in Japan) and Healing Touch," writes Paturel. According to Mimi Guarneri, a cardiologist and president of the Academy of Integrative Health and Medicine in San Diego, these therapies are based on the idea that just like circulatory, nervous and lymphatic systems in our body, there is also a biofield system. We get some idea of "biofield" through an understanding of electroencephalograms (EEGs) used for studying brain waves, and electrocardiograms (ECGs) used for assessing heart health, which includes measuring parts of biofield

by placing electrodes on a different area of the body and interpreting the electromagnetic output. Biofield also includes what Shamini Jain, a psychologist at University of California, San Diego, calls "subtle energy," such as *prana* and chi, generically known as "life force" in India and China for thousands of years. However, studying and measuring this type of energy is not easy.

Although it is difficult to explain the mechanism of Healing Touch, one can see positive changes in mood as also a reduction in pain and anxiety in the patients. Many members of the academic and medical community are sceptical about the benefits of biofield therapies, attributing positive results to placebo effect, *i.e.*, due to the belief of the people that the treatment works. Others believe that the treatment tends to calm down people and in a relaxed state modern treatments become more effective. "Studies show that nurses who practice biofield therapies experience stress relief, improved immune function and a greater sense of connection to their patients," writes Amy Paturel. (*Discover*, May-June 2022)

Healing Touch is generally described as an "energy therapy" that uses gentle hand techniques to re-pattern a patient's energy field and accelerate healing of the body, mind and spirit. The goal of Healing Touch is to restore harmony to the patient's energy system. The article compares the "Healing Touch" with a therapy known as "laying on of hands" during ancient times, which in turn makes that practice akin to mesmerism. In the article, "The Power to Heal," H.P.B. writes that almost unanimous scepticism prevails among physicians as to the power of healing the sick by mesmeric methods. She gives an example of Dr. Newton, the American healer, who healed hundreds of sick people by the simple laying on of hands. She explains the process of healing by the analogy of the law of electric and magnetic conduction. "If a metallic body charged with positive electricity be brought into contact with a body negatively electrified, the positive fluid is discharged from the first into the second body....Apply this to the human system. A person in health is charged with positive vitality—*prana*, od, aura, electro-magnetism,

or whatever else you prefer to call it: one in ill-health is negatively charged: the positive vitality, or health element, may be discharged by an effort of the healer's will into the receptive nervous system of the patient: they touch each other, the fluid passes, equilibrium is restored in the sick man's system, the *miracle* of healing is wrought." (*The Theosophist*, April, 1883)

In mesmerism, the healer actually loses his vitality in effecting such cures and there is actual danger involved both for the curer and the cured. H.P.B. cautions eager men and women who want to cure and be cured, thus: "They should never attempt healing unless they have a surplus of vitality to spare, over and above what may be needed to carry themselves through their round of duties and keep their systems well up to tone. Otherwise, they would soon break down and become themselves invalids."

"Stop treating your pets as humans. It is hurting them. Let them be what they are," writes Dr. Nameeta Nadkarni. Anthropomorphism or attributing human emotions and experiences to animals can have adverse physical and psychological impact on them. For instance, on getting home from work if you find your slippers damaged, and find your dog standing there with his head hanging and eyes lowered, you may interpret it as an expression of shame or guilt, as a human being would express for doing something like that. However, "what they are displaying is fear. It is a response to your agitation over the damaged slipper, not guilt for their action."

Likewise, some dog owners insist on preparing three-course meals for their pets because they cannot accept that it is perfectly normal for their dogs to eat just once a day. Overfeeding and getting one's dog habituated to being hand-fed are forms of anthropomorphism and can lead to obesity, which in turn can lead to diseases which are not peculiar to animals. Indiscriminate feeding can lead to malnutrition. Since they are seen as humans, they are dressed up for certain occasions. However, it is important to maintain hygiene else it can lead to skin infections.

We tend to project human emotions on our pets in other areas of life, failing to realize, for instance, that in pets "maternal sentiments are fleeting, lasting till they are feeding the babies....Hugging, a very human expression of affection, may not be tolerated by pets....The very beauty in our companion animals lies in the fact that they are not humans. We have to learn to love them in a way that is right for them," writes Dr. Nameeta Nadkarni, a practising veterinary soft tissue surgeon and pet blogger from Mumbai, in an article published at the website, *lifestyle.livemint.com*, May 19, 2022.

Man has always kept pets for various reasons. Dogs were domesticated and trained to be watchdogs and also used for hunting. Similarly, horses, cats and certain birds like parrots, have been domesticated all down the ages. Alarmingly, more and more people are keeping pets to get over loneliness and depression. Pets seem to be taking the place of human companions. Animals must be treated with love and compassion, but we need not make them our constant companions, and much worse, attempt to humanize them. The most important thing for the animal is to have experience in the species to which it belongs. They are unable to have that experience when they are cut off from their natural surroundings. An animal has to learn self-defence, find food for himself, etc. Hence, when some people say that their dog is able to appreciate music, they fail to see that appreciation of music is not the next step in a dog's development. In fact, in close proximity with humans, they tend to pick up lower tendencies. For instance, a pet dog that is showered with love and attention all the time is often found, out of jealousy, to harm the new-born baby, towards whom the family's attention may be shifted. It would be comparatively better to keep a dog and use him as a watchdog.

From the occult point of view, there is a continuous exchange of atoms or "lives," going on between man and the lower kingdoms. When we keep pets, there is an abnormal interchange of life particles. The animal is at a lower stage of evolution, while man is on a higher rung of evolution. Animal evolution is unnaturally forced and the

task of developing instinct is interfered with. On the other hand, when we link ourselves so intimately with animal nature, we hold back our own human evolution, "animalizing" our own character. The need for abstaining from keeping pets is still greater as one advances on the spiritual path, since one is required to keep one's magnetism pure. A disciple has to live, so to say, in his own atmosphere in order to individualize it for occult purposes.

We have expectations from others, ourselves and the world at large. When we have expectations not based on facts or analysis, then we are in for disappointment. "We live in a largely uncertain world, consequently this desire for certainty often sets us up for disappointment and pain. While some things might be in our control, many are not," writes Marguerite Theophil. An old man used to sit outside the gates of a palace. One winter day the king noticed him shivering and promised to arrange for a warm coat and blanket to be sent out immediately. However, the king had to attend to some urgent business and could not keep his promise. The next day, the old man was found dead with a note that read: "For all these years I shivered and yet survived, but the expectation of warm clothes makes the cold unbearable, and will be the death of me."

On the other hand, expectations can motivate us, help us envision the future and make us want to reach our goals. There is nothing wrong to expect others to treat us fairly and respectfully. However, an expectation is not a wish or a hope. The possibility remains that others may not live up to one's expectations and that should not upset us. "Becoming more realistic about expectations does not mean that we need to stop setting goals or dreaming....We can still ask for what we want...And most of all, learn to take *no* for an answer. While not easy, adjusting unrealistic expectations can bring enormous mental and emotional relief."

It is not always easy to live up to another's expectations. If we are not careful, we find ourselves living for others' approval. It is

also important that we treat others the way we expect them to treat us. In inter-personal expectations, it is sometimes necessary to *express* what we expect from other people and likewise, learn to listen to them, writes Marguerite Theophil. (*Sunday Times of India*, The Speaking Tree, May 1, 2022)

In Psychology, an expectation is defined as emotional anticipation or belief of an occurrence that may take place in future. It is not a mere wishful thinking. When we expect to achieve something, we move it from the realm of impossibility to the realm of possibility. Expectations can bring out the best in a person. Sometimes high expectations from one's own self can be equivalent to aiming or aspiring high. When an arrow is aimed at the target, it is slightly raised to allow for the trajectory, which is due to the force of gravity acting upon it. We are required to aim high and allow for the trajectory that comes about from the limitations of our nature. "The calls of the senses, heredity, defects, and wrong habits...never permit us to do as much as we would wish to," writes Mr. Judge. When viewed in the light of the doctrine of Karma, what plays a pivotal role in the fulfilment of our expectations is our karma from the present and past lives.

Studies in psychology have shown that our expectations for kids can actually affect how they behave and how they learn. Therefore, we must expect the best, expect that our children, our friends, and our students will succeed because by doing that we are giving them exactly the kind of support they need to succeed, writes Vanessa LoBue, a professor of psychology at Rutgers University.

In a spiritual context, the power of expectation plays an important role. Our efforts are determined by our expectations. When a student-aspirant wavers in his discipline at some point in time, he resolves that in future he will not oscillate so much. Mr. Crosbie advises that "This is not the true position—it shows he expects to oscillate some. Of course, if he expects to oscillate, he will oscillate. It would be better to expect to hit the mark, instead of expecting to miss. There is a great difference in the psychological position, *as well as in the quality of the energy aroused*. We should cease doubting our power to accomplish."

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The United Lodge of Theosophists

DECLARATION

THE policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the great Founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the Philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF, a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable *Basis for Union* among Theosophists, wherever and however situated, is "*similarity of aim, purpose and teaching*," and therefore has neither Constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that *basis*. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and

It welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.

"*The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect, yet belongs to each and all.*"

Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge, as set forth in its "Declaration," I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate, it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part, other than that which I, myself, determine.

The foregoing is the form signed by Associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists. Inquiries are invited from all persons to whom this Movement may appeal. Cards for signature will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance furnished to Associates in their studies and in efforts to form local Lodges. There are no fees of any kind, and no formalities to be complied with.

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